



# Congressman Tim Bishop

*FIRST DISTRICT -- NEW YORK*

## NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **BISHOP CONTINUES TO HOLD COAST GUARD ACCOUNTABLE TO ENSURE BOATER SAFETY**

**Moriches, NY**-On Friday, Congressman Tim Bishop was briefed by senior staff of the United States Coast Guard about the implementation of moving command staff off Long Island, from Moriches to New Haven, Connecticut. Bishop said that despite his reservations with moving the command center off Long Island, he is currently satisfied that the Coast Guard is adequately protecting the safety of Long Island's boaters.

Bishop was briefed on the current situation by a number of serious Coast Guard officials, including Rear Admiral David Pecoske (Commander, First District-Boston) and Captain Peter Boynton (Commander, Sector Long Island Sound-New Haven).

"I had serious reservations with moving the command center off Long Island," Bishop said. "I was worried that we would see slower response times, lose knowledge about things like local names for landmarks, and potentially lose responders. I am pleased to say that thus far those fears were unfounded. While I will remain vigilant in keeping the Coast Guard accountable, I am very pleased with their performance thus far."

Last year the Coast Guard announced that it was moving 18 command and control positions off Long Island. Those positions were to be transferred from the Moriches Station to stations in New Haven, Connecticut and Woods Hole, Massachusetts. The positions were all command staff, not responders. For instance, the Moriches Station remains open with 50 Coast Guard personnel and boats for rescues. The impact is that calls that previously went to Moriches now go to New Haven. For a boater who calls the Coast Guard, it is meant to be a seamless transition. The change began on April 17, and the final dispatch staff left Moriches after Memorial Day weekend. Over that weekend, one of the busiest boating weekends of the year, there were several rescue missions launched, and there was no decrease in response time.

Bishop and local officials and first responders objected to the move, citing the excellent relationships the Coast Guard had developed on Long Island. While the Coast Guard went ahead with the move, they assured Bishop that they would go back to the previous arrangement if problems developed. They also agreed to regular briefings, and to take all steps to assure the safety of Long Island boaters. Boynton, who commands the New Haven Station, told Bishop for example, that all his dispatchers have to take an oral exam where they are quizzed about local Long Island names for landmarks.

In addition to this meeting, Bishop will be holding another meeting with the Coast Guard and Long Island first responders at the conclusion of the boating season to discuss how the change went, and make recommendations for improvements.

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